



Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs

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“Gratitude and Deep Appreciation”

Veterans From Throughout Kentucky Honored by South Korean General

(LOUISVILLE, KY July 25, 2008) When KDVA staff arrived at the Exposition Center at 7:45 a.m. Thursday to begin preparing for the 2 p.m. ceremony honoring veterans of the Korean War, James B. Short was waiting for them. The Army veteran of Korea and two tours in Vietnam had driven up the night before from Harlan.

“Nobody ever gave me anything for my service before,” he said. “I wasn’t about to miss this.”

“This” was the presentation of special medallions and certificates to Kentucky’s veterans of the Korean War, from Major General (ret.) Choi, Seung-Woo.

“Today I came to Louisville, Kentucky to honor the Korean War Veterans,” General Choi told the crowd of 500 veterans and their families, “and on behalf of the Korean people to bring a message of gratitude and deep appreciation to the Korean War Veterans for their invaluable sacrifice.”

From every region of the state the veterans came to the Exposition Center. From Paducah, Princeton, Owensboro, Island, Crofton, Cadiz, Murray, Mayfield, Drakesboro and Leitchfield in the west; from Harlan, Isom, Salt Lick, Neon, Greenup and Corbin in the east; from Somerset,

Monticello, Whitley City, Campbellsville, Scottsville, Glasgow and Bowling Green in the south; from Newport and Bedford in the north, and from Hodgenville, Danville and Wilmore in the center.

One hundred and forty-five veterans or survivors received their medallions; almost 300 more registered for the event but were unable to attend. KDVA will deliver or mail medallions and certificates to those veterans.

Marine veteran William F. Hixon couldn't get transportation to Louisville from his Carlisle County home in far western Kentucky, so his Louisville grandchildren John Hixson Evans and Sarah Evans accepted the medallion and certificate on his behalf.

Army Specialist Molly Mullins, in dress uniform, accepted the medallion and certificate for her late grandfather, Robert Hassell Mullins.

Although General Choi stepped down from the stage to present medals to the veterans in wheelchairs who could not negotiate the stairs to the stage, many barely ambulatory veterans insisted on walking, however haltingly, to stand before General Choi and salute him, before bowing their heads to receive the medallion.

For each, General Choi had private words of gratitude. Many veterans smiled and replied; some wordlessly embraced the general.

Fifty-five years after the end of fighting, the "Forgotten War" may be overlooked in the U.S., but is well remembered in South Korea, General Choi assured the audience.

"Once having struggled for its own survival, South Korea now is the 12th largest economy in the world, and more importantly, we are one of the best working democracies in Asia, as well as one of the biggest trading partners and a strong ally of the USA.

"We Koreans owe this to you and your country. I salute you, Korean War Veterans, from the bottom of my heart with the deepest respect and honor, for the work well done and the cause you fought for.

"As far as the Koreans are concerned, you are like our Founding Fathers and you laid the foundation of Korea today with your blood and sweat.

"You are indeed a living proof and a shining symbol of what America stands for."

Attached Photos:

Army Specialist Molly Mullin received the medallion for her grandfather from General Choi.

Former POW and survivor of the Tiger Death March Jack Browning, of Frankfort, poses with his medal and General Choi.